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LISTENING

Listening for detail

- 1 Listen to Edward again, and take notes to help you answer the following questions:
 - a How old was Edward when this happened?
 - b What was the father doing when Edward told him?
 - c How did the father react?
 - d Who had Edward discussed his plans with? Why?
 - e What impression do you get of Edward's attitude to other people at this time?
 - f How had he got in touch with the army the first time?
 - g What did he do when he got the first train ticket?
 - h What was his work situation like when he got the second one?
 - i How did he feel when he had finally made up his mind?
 - j What was he pleased to leave behind?
 - k What did the father give him as they parted?
 - l Why do you think the father cried at the end?
 - m How did Edward feel when he saw his father crying?
 - n What does that tell us about the relationship between them.
 - o Why did the father have so little to say to Edward before he left?

SPEAKING

Expressing opinions

- 2 Discuss in pairs or small groups.
 - a Can Edward's background and situation in life explain why he made his rather serious decision?
 - b Do you think it would turn out to be a wise decision? Why?/Why not?
 - c Could you have made such a choice?

WRITING

Writing a diary

- 3 When Edward has left, his father has no one to turn to but his diary. Write his diary entry.

Writing a personal letter

- 4 Two years later, write Edward's letter to his father. Has he regretted his decision or is he glad he enlisted in the army?

Writing a personal text

- 5 Write a personal text inspired by the recruiting poster on this page. Genre and title is entirely up to you.

ROALD DAHL (1916–1990) was born in Wales, but his parents were Norwegian. He was both a novelist and a short story author, writing for both children and adults. Among his most popular books are *James and the Giant Peach* (1961), *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (1964), *Matilda* (1982) and *The Witches* (1973). Many of his short stories have become successful television films.

The story "The Way up to Heaven" was first published in *The New Yorker* in 1954, and was included in his collection *Kiss Kiss* in 1960. It was first dramatised for the TV series "Suspicion" in 1958, and then as "Tales of the Unexpected" in 1979.

Dahl was fascinated by the strange and the macabre and his stories often have a twist ending. He had a special kind of black humour and saw abnormalities in most people.

BEFORE YOU READ

"When writing stories I cannot seem to rid myself of the unfortunate habit of having one person do nasty things to another person. In this particular story the nasty thing that one person does to the other is far, far nastier than would appear at first sight."

Does this introduction by the author himself make you want to read the story? What kind of story do you think it is?

twitch *rykning/rykking; å rykke*
(muskel)
obsession *besettelse / fiks idé,*
mani
flutter about *fare hit og dit*
state *tilstand*
emerge *dukke opp*
misery *lidelse, fortvilelse / lidning,*
fortvilning
purposely *med vilje*
inflict *påføre, utsette for / påføre,*
utsetje for
nasty *slem, stygg*
discipline *oppdra, tukte*
unreasonable *ugrunnet, urimelig*
/ ugrunna, urimeleg
modest *beskjeden, kravløs /*
smålåten, kravlaus
consciously *bevisst, med vilje*
torment *plage*

ROALD DAHL

The Way up to Heaven

Part One All her life Mrs Foster had feared missing a train, a plane, or a boat. In other respects, she was not particularly nervous, but the thought of being late would make her so nervous that she would begin to twitch. It was nothing much, just a tiny twitch of a muscle by the left eye.

It grew into a serious obsession. At least half an hour before it was time to leave the house, she would be ready to go. And then she would flutter about until her husband, who must have been well aware of her state, finally emerged and suggested in a cool dry voice that perhaps they had better get going.

Mr Eugene Foster, who was nearly seventy years old, may have had a right to be irritated by his wife, but he had no excuse for increasing her misery by keeping her waiting unnecessarily. It is not certain that this is what he did, yet whenever they were to go somewhere he was just a minute or two late, and it was hard to believe he wasn't purposely inflicting a nasty private little torture of his own on the unhappy lady. He must have known that she would never dare tell him to hurry. He had disciplined her too well for that. He must also have known that if he waited long enough, he could drive her nearly into hysterics. On one or two occasions, it seemed as though he had wanted to miss the train simply to intensify the poor woman's suffering.

His attitude was unreasonable because Mrs Foster was and always had been a good and loving wife. For over thirty years, she had served him loyally and well. The modest Mrs Foster had for years refused to believe that he would ever consciously torment her, but recently she had begun to wonder.